

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.





## Making Your Way

## The Best Time

## "Lining" Upstream

## Bears, No Fooling!

### Water Level Changes

Flow (Discharge), cubic feet/second

160,000  
120,000  
80,000  
40,000  
0

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

River freeze period

Spring melt

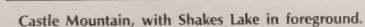
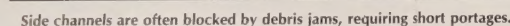
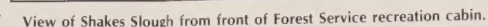
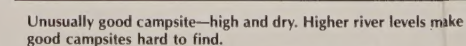
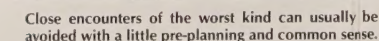
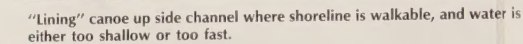
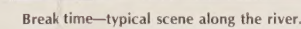
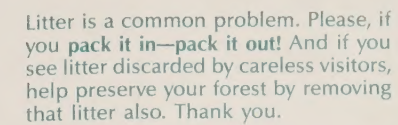
Fall rains

**Average monthly flow on the Stikine River near Wrangell  
(based on 6 years of data, 1978-83).**

Month	Flow (cubic feet/second)
Jan	10,000
Feb	8,000
Mar	5,000
Apr	10,000
May	60,000
Jun	135,000
Jul	130,000
Aug	105,000
Sep	80,000
Oct	65,000
Nov	30,000
Dec	10,000

Wrangell Ranger District  
Tongass National Forest  
P.O. Box 51  
Wrangell, Alaska 99929

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### Kakwan Point to Canada Border

There are two Forest Service cabins located at the mouth of Shakes Slough. From here one may paddle up to Shakes Lake (see Shakes Lake Route description).

There are several channels through the Goat Creek Islands which offer easy paddling at high river stages. Some short portages over gravel bars at the head of these sloughs may be required if the river level is low.

An area of very high velocities, strong eddies, and dangerous whirlpools is located along the

south shore of the river just downstream of Mt. Flermer Forest Service cabin. One should cross over to the north shore, and travel behind the island at this point in order to avoid this dangerous and difficult area. Once reaching the main river again, it is easy to cross to the south shore. Mt. Flermer cabin is located at the mouth of Clearwater Slough. One may continue upstream along the south shore into Canada or paddle up Clearwater Slough into Red Slough. This slough offers some interesting paddling with some side creeks to explore; however, it does not connect back to the Stikine River. Kikahie River is an interesting side trip with good camping sites.

Named after Kah Shakes, Chief of the Tlingit Indian Village, Shakes Slough is an interesting side trip off the main river. The slough is actually a glacial stream flowing from Shakes Lake. Shakes Glacier empties into this lake leaving many icebergs. It's an easy paddle up to the lake with one small rapids which must be lined below

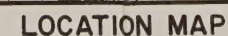
river stages of 18 feet. A tent spot is located near the mouth of the lake. Castle Mountain, at an elevation of 7300 feet, provides a spectacular backdrop to the lake. John Muir visited this spot on his trip up the Stikine River prospecting for glaciers in 1879. Shakes Lake usually remains frozen until late June.

This route is an alternate way upriver and allows access to Chief Shakes Hot Spring and Barnes Lake. Hot Spring Slough, also known as the Ketili River, is a good route in which to observe moose and beaver. Ketili is a Tlingit Indian name meaning hot spring. At a river stage less than 15 feet, there is shallow, fast water near the mouth of the slough which can be lined. At high river levels it is possible to paddle up Alpine Creek which is a beautiful clear water stream with many nice camping spots located along its sand bars. The Ketili River area is traveled frequently on weekends and evenings by power boats, and Alpine Creek is a good way to get away from the traffic.

Chief Shakes Hot Springs is located on a side slough that enters the Ketili River just upstream of an island, about two miles up from the main river. This is a good place to soak aching muscles in the hot tub, but it receives heavy use during the evenings and weekends.

The Hot Spring Slough has moderate velocities and is a relatively easy route up the river. Ketili Creek is another interesting side trip. It is about a four-mile paddle up to Barnes Lake and there is some good camping along the way. Several beaver dams must be portaged near the lake. There is a warm spring located near a tributary of the lake but it is difficult to find because of thick brush and low temperatures. It is very marshy around Barnes Lake and camping is difficult, but the view from the lake is beautiful.

After the Hot Spring Slough Route connects back to the main river, it is best to remain along the north shore and connect with the Main River Route.





Introduction

This brochure describes the opportunities for wilderness travel by canoe and kayak on the Stikine River, part of the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness of the Tongass National Forest near Petersburg and Wrangell, Alaska. Several routes are described by which one can paddle upriver, leaving from Petersburg or Wrangell, and travel through the coastal mountains of Alaska into British Columbia.

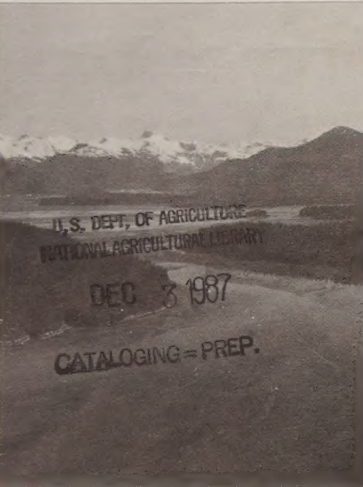


View of middle arm Stikine River from south end of Mitkof Island. This is the departure and return point from Petersburg for paddle trip up river.

Reserve 06V776.A457

United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Alaska Region  
R10-RG-4

Stikine River  
Canoe/Kayak Routes



History

Stikine is a Tlingit Indian name meaning "Great River." The river drains an area of 20,000 square miles and is about 400 miles long. It was often used by the coastal Indians who paddled and sailed canoes upstream in order to catch salmon and to trade. The first influx of white men occurred in 1861 when gold was discovered in the gravel bars of the Stikine River. In 1873 gold was found in the Cassiar Region of Canada, and the Stikine was a major route to the area. During the Klondike gold rush thousands of stampedeers ascended the frozen river in the winter of 1898, as an easy route through the coast range to the Interior and the Northwest Territory. John Muir made a trip up the Stikine in 1879 and described the coastal mountain area as a Yosemite one-hundred miles long. The river exists today as it did then, uninhabited and unrestrained by man.

Characteristics

The Stikine River is multi-channelled, about 0.9 mile wide and heavily laden with silt. Within Alaska the river flows through a spectacular glaciated valley flanked by steep walls and hanging valleys. Glaciers still cover the mountains and descend to as low as the 100-foot elevation at Shakes Lake. The islands and flats support large stands of cottonwood and willow, and the steep mountainsides are nearly covered with a forest of Sitka spruce and hemlock. The area abounds in wildlife with black bear, brown bear, moose, beaver, wolf, deer, mountain goat, bald eagles, salmon, and trout. The river delta is host to large numbers and varieties of migrating waterfowl. During April, the section of the river below Limb Island is host to an unusually large concentration of bald eagles, which come to feed on spawning eulachon (local name: hooligan).

Power Boats

The Stikine River is traveled frequently by power boats between Wrangell and Shakes Hot Springs during evenings and on weekends. The North Arm and Middle Arm are the best routes for avoiding this boat traffic.

Hazards

Common hazards are: exhaustingly cold water and silt-laden water that fills clothing fibers and weights you down (both are problems if you overturn); log jams, sweepers (trees leaning into the water course but attached to bank or bottom), and free-floating logs; tidal currents; and unsafe drinking water (all water should be boiled).

North Arm Route  
Knig Slough to Kakwan Point

From Mitkof Island the best route upriver is the North Arm via Knig Slough. Caution is required in crossing the tide flats due to strong tidal currents, winds, and shallow water. Departing from the boat ramp at mile 35.5 on the Mitkof Highway three hours before high tide, one can "ride the tide" a good deal of the way up Knig Slough. Depending on the tide and river level, it may be easiest to line the craft up part of Knig Slough. The north bank is excellent for this purpose. As the slough approaches the North Arm, lining is not possible due to heavy brush along the bank. There is good camping

where the slough joins the North Arm, and on many of the sand bars of the North Arm. A Forest Service cabin is located at Mallard Slough, about six miles down the North Arm where it joins Frederick Sound (see map insert). LeConte Glacier, the southern-most tidewater glacier in Alaska, is located at the head of LeConte Bay near Mallard Slough. Paddling up the North Arm is not difficult if one stays close to the shore and takes advantage of existing back eddies. At low river stages many islands and gravel bars provide good lining opportunities. There are some side sloughs

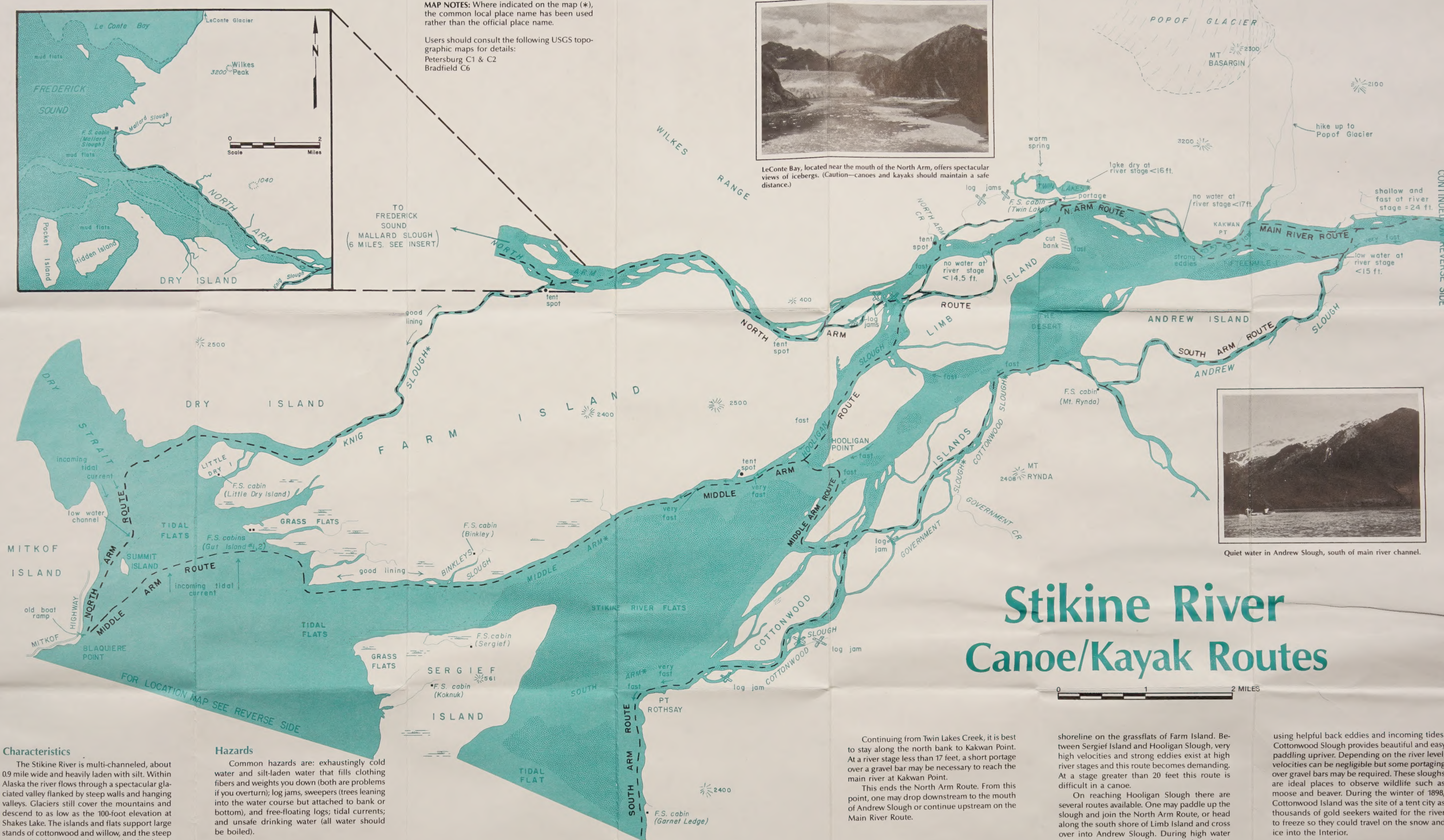
along this route that have little or no velocity, and also are excellent places to observe moose and beaver. A short portage is often necessary at the upper end of these sloughs due to low water levels. Small log jams may also have to be portaged at the head of some sloughs. North Arm Creek and Twin Lakes are interesting places to stop along this route. A Forest Service cabin is located on the North Arm at the mouth of Twin Lakes Creek. At a river stage at or above 16 feet, it is possible to paddle up the outlet creek to the lakes. Below this stage there is a short portage trail from the mouth of the outlet to the second lake. A warm springs is located near the outlet of Twin Lakes.

MAP NOTES: Where indicated on the map (\*), the common local place name has been used rather than the official place name.

Users should consult the following USGS topographic maps for details:  
Petersburg C1 & C2  
Bradfield C6



LeConte Bay, located near the mouth of the North Arm, offers spectacular views of icebergs. (Caution—canoes and kayaks should maintain a safe distance.)



Stikine River  
Canoe/Kayak Routes

Continuing from Twin Lakes Creek, it is best to stay along the north bank to Kakwan Point. At a river stage less than 17 feet, a short portage over a gravel bar may be necessary to reach the main river at Kakwan Point.

This ends the North Arm Route. From this point, one may drop downstream to the mouth of Andrew Slough or continue upstream on the Main River Route.

Middle Arm Route  
Mitkof Island to North Arm  
or to Cottonwood Slough

This route begins at the boat ramp on Mitkof Island and follows the south shore of Farm Island. It is best to begin two to three hours before high tide and take the shortest route to Farm Island. The shallow water in these tidal flats can become very choppy when a wind is blowing against the tide current. There are several Forest Service cabins in the area; one on Little Dry Island, two on Gut Island, two on Sergief Island, and one at Binkley Slough on Farm Island.

Velocities can be high in the Middle Arm and lining is often the best method of travel. There is a three-mile stretch of good walking

shoreline on the grassflats of Farm Island. Between Sergief Island and Hooligan Slough, very high velocities and strong eddies exist at high river stages and this route becomes demanding. At a stage greater than 20 feet this route is difficult in a canoe.

On reaching Hooligan Slough there are several routes available. One may paddle up the slough and join the North Arm Route, or head along the south shore of Limb Island and cross over into Andrew Slough. During high water when velocities are high it is best to drop downriver and paddle into Cottonwood Slough where you join the South Arm Route.

South Arm Route  
Wrangell to Andrew Slough

This route originates from Wrangell, Alaska, and is the fastest route on the river. One should begin two to three hours before high tide since the river mud flats must be crossed. The area adjacent to the Garnet Ledge cabin should be reached at high tide.

Rounding Point Rothsay can be demanding at river stages above 20 feet but it is possible

using helpful back eddies and incoming tides. Cottonwood Slough provides beautiful and easy paddling upriver. Depending on the river level, velocities can be negligible but some portaging over gravel bars may be required. These sloughs are ideal places to observe wildlife such as moose and beaver. During the winter of 1898, Cottonwood Island was the site of a tent city as thousands of gold seekers waited for the river to freeze so they could travel on the snow and ice into the Interior.

High velocities are present at the head of Cottonwood Slough but it is not a difficult paddle up to Andrew Slough. A Forest Service cabin is located where Andrew Creek joins Andrew Slough. At high water one may paddle up Andrew Creek for a scenic side trip. There are good camping spots up this creek and goose and bear may be seen. Andrews Slough provides an excellent way of getting upriver. Several clear water streams run into Andrew Slough and they can be paddled up when the river is at a high stage. When the river stage is less than 15 feet, a short portage is required to reach the main river. Upstream from Andrew Slough the river velocities are very high on the south side and it is best to cross over to the north bank and join the Main River Route.